



Update in relation to midwifery and nursing students in all fields, who are not in the final six months of their programme

Wednesday 25 March 2020

Joint statement on expanding the nursing and midwifery workforce in the Covid-19 outbreak

You may already have seen our **joint statements** in relation to expanding the nursing and midwifery workforce to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. These statements describe how we would facilitate nurses and midwives to return to the register to support services and how we would maximise the contribution of student nurses and midwives who are in the last six months of their pre-registration education.

Given the level of challenge this emergency brings to health and care services, when as many people as possible are needed to deliver care in a way that is safe and effective to meet demand, we also wanted to examine the role of students who are not in the final six months of their programme.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council have developed a set of emergency standards which allows more flexibility to be applied to the delivery of nursing and midwifery programmes. The objective of doing this is to enable students to make a valuable contribution whilst completing their studies, and to ensure that more junior students are appropriately deployed and adequately supported during this time. Different circumstances exist in different settings across our four countries. If the decision is taken to change the nature of the programme delivery using the flexibility these standards bring, Approved Education Institutions (AEIs), placement providers and senior leaders in each of the four countries will wish to take into consideration local factors which may have implications for safety, ease of operational delivery and staff and student preferences before making a change. These standards are only in place for the duration of the emergency.

1. For first year midwifery and nursing students in all fields:

These students will continue with their nursing and midwifery programme. Their clinical placements may be paused, and for the duration of the emergency they will pursue their academic work. Nursing and midwifery students may volunteer or undertake paid work in a clinical setting in their spare time, while they maintain their academic study. Volunteering or paid work will not be counted towards the practice hours and experience required to complete their pre-registration course.

2. For all other nursing and midwifery students in all fields, and first year post-graduate diploma/masters students:

These students will be invited to opt-in to an arrangement where they may spend 80 percent of time in clinical practice, which would be remunerated (and will count towards practice hours as it will be part of the student's programme), and 20 percent in academic study during this emergency period. The purpose of the period of academic study would be to build in designated structured, regular contact with their AEI. AEIs will maintain academic and pastoral support throughout the programme, wherever the student is situated, during the emergency situation.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council agrees to:

- Introduce varied emergency education standards to enable the above options to be implemented.
- To support point 2 above, the NMC understands that it will not be possible for students on clinical placement to be supernumerary in this emergency situation but will expect students to be supervised and work within an appropriate delegated framework.
- Continue to monitor this emergency situation and will take account of the impact in the longer term on these students.

The Chief Nursing Officers for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales agree to:

- Develop appropriate deployment guidance for employers, professionals and students that are bespoke for each of the four countries of the UK, working with stakeholders, including the terms and conditions and remuneration for students working in clinical practice.
- Establish a point of contact (telephone helpline, website) for all health and social care employers in all four nations across the UK that can provide appropriate information for students.

Council of Deans of Health agrees to:

- Work with AEIs and local employers to place student nurses and midwives in clinical placements appropriately in all four nations across the UK.
- Work with AEIs to provide consistent information for students to support them to make informed choices.
- Work with AEIs to ensure that any student who does not opt in to the new arrangements is not disadvantaged. Students may continue their academic work with their cohort, and be supported to make up placement hours in the remainder of their programme.
- Work with AEIs to ensure that plans and flexible approaches for ongoing learning are put in place to enable students to progress their nursing and midwifery studies in the normal way after the emergency situation is over.
- Work with AEIs to ensure that the balance of hours across the whole programme meets normal NMC standards after this emergency period.

Royal Colleges and Trade Unions representing nurses, midwives and students agrees to:

- Provide expertise with and on behalf of their memberships to inform the development and implementation of guidance, ensuring individual choice is paramount within the context of emergency measures.
- Negotiate employment terms and conditions within emergency measures.

UK Government Department of Health and Social Care is:

- Working with other stakeholders, government bodies and devolved administrations to clarify policies concerning pay, pensions, training and student loans.

In conclusion

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our thanks and ongoing gratitude to all of you for your continuing dedication and commitment during this time which is difficult and worrying for us all.

In a rapidly changing situation, we do not yet have all the answers but please be assured that as leaders of the nursing and midwifery community, we are committed to continuing our work together and sharing further updates with you as soon as we are able to.



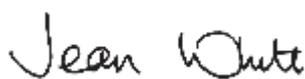
Ruth May
Chief Nursing Officer, England



Professor Fiona McQueen
Chief Nursing Officer, Scotland



Professor Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer, Northern Ireland



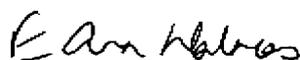
Professor Jean White CBE
Chief Nursing Officer, Wales



Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE
Chief Midwifery Officer, England



Dr Dale Spence
Midwifery Officer, Northern Ireland



Professor Ann Holmes
Chief Midwifery Officer and Associate
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